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The Dilemma of Smaller European Nations: Rethinking Future Military
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The Dilemma of Smaller European Nations: Rethinking Future Military Cooperation and Capability Development

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Thesis: Smaller member states should continue their transformation by committing themselves to permanent structured cooperation in the framework of the European Union.

Discussion: The European Union is progressing towards further integration and enlargement. The European Security and Defense Policy is a tool for harmonizing the foreign and security policies of the member states and thereby increasing the European defense capabilities. Implementation of the European Security Strategy calls for Europe to take shared responsibility for the global security threats.

Future military capabilities to counter the security threats require further transformation of the European armed forces into more flexible, mobile forces. Accomplishing such transformation calls for multinational cooperation and specialization. Defining needs at the EU level will harmonize capability requirements. Smaller member states, due to their limited force structures are the first to face the hard decisions to commit themselves into collective security and defense arrangements.

Permanent structured cooperation should aim towards joint, interoperable and modular based forces. This will require thorough multinational military integration.

Conclusion: The European integrated force architecture represents a realistic and relevant military alternative for the EU and thus the guideline for smaller member states role and future capability development. Smaller European member states future military capability development should aim towards developing niche capabilities in the framework of the EU based on permanent structured cooperation.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ACRONYMS

AWACS   Airborne Early Warning and Control System

BG   Battle Group

CFSP   Common Foreign and Security Policy

ECAP   European Capability and Action Plan

EDA   European Defense Agency

ESDI   European Security and Defense Initiative

ESDP   European Security and Defense Policy

ESS   European Security Strategy

EU   European Union

HLG 2010   Headline Goal 2010

HHG   Helsinki Headline Goals

IMF   International Monetary Fund

MAGTF   Marine Air Ground Task Force

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NRF   NATO Response Force

PC 2000   Progress Catalogue 2000

PCC   Prague Capability Commitments

TEU   Treaty of the European Union

UN   United Nations

WEU   Western European Union

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Background

Although the European Union (EU) can be characterized as an economic superpower, the

Union itself has limited military capability. The Kosovo conflict in 1999 underlined the dilemma

facing the Europeans by the continuing reluctance of America to commit ground troops when

Europe itself was not equipped or capable to fulfill that mission.[1] This main lesson led the

European Council to conclude that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action,

backed by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and the readiness to do so,

in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO."[2] To that end,

member states made a number of efforts to increase the EU's military capability. Establishment

of the multinational EU Battle Groups (BGs) and deployment of EU forces in various

peacekeeping missions, from Africa to the former Yugoslavia, are some of the concrete results

that have been achieved so far.

Meanwhile many smaller EU member states are facing considerable challenges to maintain a

balanced and relevant force structure, and to meet the requirements. First, they have to deal with

participation in simultaneous operations in several theaters deemed crucial to either EU or

NATO interests or for special national concerns. Second, demanding qualitative requirements

specified by the EU's BGs initiative and the NATO Response Force (NRF) are based on high-

ready units. The main challenge is thereby to attain a permanent balance between tasks,

structure, and resources. The key question that arises is thereby how smaller member states

should approach development of their operational capabilities to meet future military

requirements in a situation where traditional national sovereignty is evolving.

In line with the ongoing integration of the EU, *smaller member states should opt for developing niche capabilities in the framework of the EU based on permanent structured cooperation.*

Research Methodology

The analysis of this paper is based upon a series of secondary questions that provide partial answers – the building blocks – of this paper. The secondary questions are:

1. What are the European security interests and threats?
2. What are the future capability requirements?
3. How can this be accomplished?
4. What are the implications?

The analysis rests on open-source materials. The governing assumption is that the information from open sources captures the salient elements of authenticity.

CHAPTER 2 – EUROPEAN SECURITY

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the EU, considered as a single economy, is now the largest in the world.[3] The EU is progressing towards further European integration and enlargement to encompass most European nations. Power is thus being transferred to a supranational Union which is gradually degrading national sovereignty. The development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) are evolving as complementary processes to Europe's deepening

economic and political progress.[4] The majority of the EU members want Europe to become a more powerful and influential actor, along with the United States and other partners. This conviction is sufficient to drive the integration process forward.

<u>European Security Interests</u>

The EU plays an important role in building a stable and peaceful Europe. The EU's security interests, as defined in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) Article No. 11, are "to preserve peace and strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter."[5]

To defend its security and promote its values the EU has three strategic objectives: it must address the threats, foster security in its neighborhood, and contribute to global governance based on effective multilateralism.[6] Europe has a responsibility to contribute to peace and prosperity in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent. Conflict prevention and conflict resolution in the European neighborhood remains a priority. Securing the European economy and energy supplies is a global endeavor. The CFSP serves the interests of its citizens and must be supported by appropriate means, to include military power, that can serve this end. The European Security Strategy (ESS) reflects the European security thinking and outlines the EU's values and objectives in the fields CFSP and ESDP.

<u>European Security Strategy</u>

Implementation of the ESS of December 2003 calls on "Europe to be ready to share the responsibility for global security and in building a better world."[7] The strategy identifies the five

key future threats to be: regional instability, state failure, international terrorism, organized crime, and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation.[8]

Regional conflicts and failed or failing states are threats to European interests. The ethnic cleansing in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999 required assistance from NATO and the US. Escalating violence in failed states also poses a severe challenge to Europe, and today the EU is involved in several independent peace operations. International terrorism, organized crime, and WMD are also threats addressed by the ESS. Although military means can contribute to end violent conflicts, the use of force by the EU can only complement the manifold European efforts to establish functioning governments which in turn will be able to fight terrorism and crime. The proliferation of WMD must, according to the EU, be addressed by international law and cannot be countered by military means alone.[9]

One key aspect of the strategy is that it envisages a "role for both 'soft' and 'hard' power as part of the EU foreign policy."[10] Thus, future security depends on multiple forms of power and multiple actors. By incorporating military power into a larger toolbox of EU capabilities, the ESS reflects the complexity of the security threats and a requirement for military forces prepared for a wide spectrum of contingencies.

CHAPTER 3 – FUTURE CAPABILITIES

The security threats prioritized in the ESS are dispersed and not limited to a particular area of the world and these threats require more than a pure military response.[11] Military operations will encompass not only combat, but also various peacetime operations and

international engagements. These forces require a broad spectrum of modular capabilities, to include civil elements that could be task organized into the force structure. Thus, future European forces have to be able to operate inherently joint and combined. In short, the characteristics of future EU operations will be expeditionary, multinational and multi-instrumental, directed at achieving security and stability more than military victory.[12]

<center>Capability Requirements and Initiatives</center>

Both NATO's Prague Capability Commitment (PCC) and the European Capability Action Plan (ECAP), later replaced by the Progress Catalogue 2000 (PC 2000), identify almost identical European capability shortfalls. Currently the most significant deficiencies to undertake high intensity interventions are: deployable forces, mobility of forces, sustainability of operations, effective engagement, and C4ISR.[13]

To push the integration of coherent capabilities of the member states, ESDI established the European Defense Agency (EDA) in July 2004. The purpose was to provide a top-down political support for defense transformation of the member states, strengthening the links with national defense establishments, and ensuring that the resources and commitments to make up the targets are built into the national planning systems.[14] The key issue is thereby to ensure that the prioritized EU capability requirements are being used as input for national capability developments. The driving force of this approach is the realization among ESDI and member governments that the capability requirements cannot be met alone by individual nations.[15]

<u>The EU Battle Group Initiative</u>

In line with the paramount capability requirements, the EU defined the Headline Goal 2010 (HLG 2010). In this document, the member states committed themselves to develop a military capability benefiting the full spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the TEU.[16] The BG initiative was a direct result of this process. According to the EU Council, the BG is the minimum militarily effective, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations, or of being used for the initial phase of larger operations.[17] The BGs are based on the "principle of multinationality and may be formed by a framework nation or by a multinational coalition of member states for an autonomous EU operation."[18] They are, however, largely restricted to land forces and any capability requirements beyond the BGs are not reflected in HLG 2010. If restricted to primarily land forces, any European crisis management capability would require the ad hoc and thus unresponsive addition of air and maritime elements. Consequently, the EU's articulated capability requirements and its capability development process are inconsistent. In spite of successful accomplishment of the HLG 2010, the EU will still be far from creating any joint combined and expeditionary capability as identified both by the ESS and the PC 2000. For this reason, the current perspective of HLG 2010, focusing primarily on the EU BGs, is too narrow and should be revised.

CHAPTER 4 – CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Today, the European capability development is primarily aiming towards realization of HLG 2010 and concerns only parts of the member states armed forces – primarily the BG initiative. In other areas, member states attempt to improve shortfalls, primarily on bilateral

level. However, the problem with such initiatives is that parties make decisions without reference to any of the existing objectives within the European framework. Member states thus cut or strengthen capabilities without reference to the usefulness for the EU as a whole.[19]

Currently the EU has no ambition to create a separate European military operational planning capability.[20] Furthermore, proposals of creating EU Maritime Reaction as well as Rapid Reaction Air Initiative are being considered, but have not yet been determined. Such initiatives are necessary and will in the long term, contribute to solving some critical capability shortfalls.[21] Effective implementation of capabilities will have to be conducted as permanent structured cooperation in the framework of a joint combined force.

<center>Permanent Structured Cooperation</center>

According to the High Representative of CFSP, Javier Solana, "The EU needs to improve the way its members collectively allocate existing defense resources. Significant capabilities can be realized when several countries pool their efforts around the same systems and operate them together."[22] Permanent structured cooperation requires a certain degree of multinational cooperation and specialization.

Multinational cooperation is possible in several ways, and at different levels of integration. Coordination of supporting capabilities in multinational frameworks, or pooling such capabilities in single multinational units is relevant for key enabling capabilities.[23] Creation of integrated larger scale joint combat formations is necessary and will thereby set the premises for other areas and level of cooperation among the member states. Specialization implies that certain

capabilities are no longer maintained by a member state, or are maintained only through participation in a multinational cooperative framework.[24] Many smaller nations provide to a certain extent niche capabilities to ongoing operations today on ad hoc basis. However, if specialization should be of real value for the EU's effort, it has to be established within a structured and permanent frame.

In the short term, aircraft capabilities offer the most promising prospects for pooling because aircraft equipment and procedures are already harmonized throughout Europe to a large extent.[25] In the field of strategic airlift, an ideal opportunity for integration presents itself due to the ongoing procurement of transport aircraft. Other opportunities for integration of land and maritime formations should be aiming at force modules that can be fully integrated in a joint integrated force structure, e.g. the U.S. Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) concept. From a European perspective, creating joint integrated force architecture seems to be the most promising way to realize the EU's capability requirements, to include limited contributions from smaller member states.

<div align="center">Joint Integrated European Force Architecture</div>

The urgent need for the EU is twofold: improving its ability to assemble joint deployable forces for a wide span of contingencies and simultaneously transforming those same forces for the future. A joint integrated force architecture consisting of three main elements, a battle management (BM) nucleus, core capabilities and service building blocks, will address both the operational and transformation challenges (Fig 1).[26]
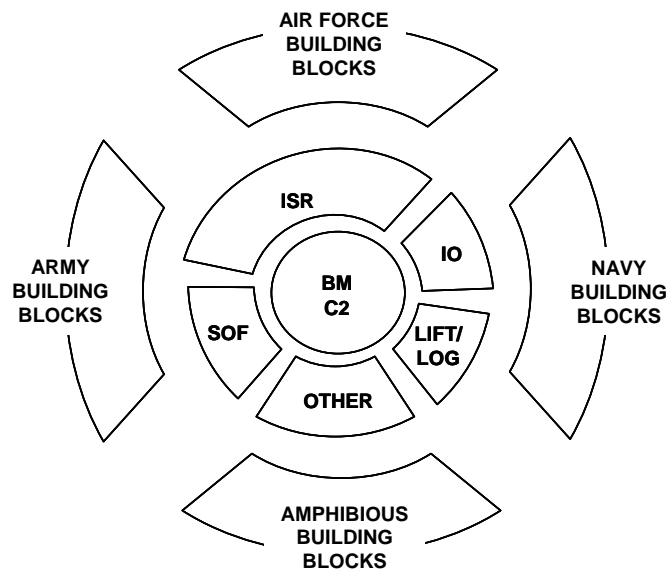
BUILDING BLOCKS – EXAMPLES

<u>Air Force</u>
- Airlift
- Air Support
- Logistics

<u>Navy</u>
- Sealift
- Maritime Task Groups
- Logistics

<u>Amphibious</u>
- Ground Combat Elements
- Air Combat Elements
- Logistics

<u>Army</u>
- Light BGs/brigades
- Mechanized BGs/brigades
- Engineers
- Civil Affairs/CIMIC
- Logistics

Figure 1 - The Building Block Concept

The battle management nucleus represents the joint force commander, the key staff personnel, and the command and control (C2) center. This BM element must be permanently manned and operational to ensure the ability to plan, assemble, and integrate a joint force for specific contingencies.[27] Monitoring and evaluation of available capabilities and their readiness should be a responsibility of the BM center. Today, the EU does not have any plan to establish a permanent operational HQ and is thereby dependent on NATO or individual member states. Dependence on ad hoc organization provided either by NATO or EU member states will, however, not enable the joint force commander (JFC) to maintain the BM's functions on permanent basis. An operational EU HQ is therefore a required and should be prioritized. Existing deployable multinational units, e.g. Eurocorps, could be the core of a joint EU HQ. Manning of such a HQ should cover all required HQ functions, reflecting the member states'

force commitments.

The core joint capabilities represent certain capabilities that will be needed early in most contingencies. Examples of such capabilities are intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), special operation forces (SOF), information operations (IO), and initial entry capabilities. These capabilities are important in their own right, but also essential to the larger service building blocks, and must enter the network rapidly in order to mount an operation.[28] The individual elements can be characterized as small scale rapid reaction elements – niche capabilities – and could be provided by most member states. Achieving the wide span of capabilities requires a division of labor among the member states.

The service building blocks encompass the main part of the force structure and require a wide range of capabilities from all services. Examples of such capabilities are strategic lift, air support, modular land and amphibious combat forces, civil affairs, logistics and maintenance. The BM nucleus has to task-organize the required service building blocks into the force structure according to specific mission requirements.[29] These modules must also be capable to enter the network rapidly. Thus, organizing, training, and equipping these modules have to be prioritized to reflect the way in which the forces will operate.[30] The capabilities must comprise a combination of high-ready and lower readiness forces to enable both responsiveness and sustainability. The various modules could be provided either by individual member states or as multinational created formations, and thus facilitate smaller nations' limited, but relevant, contributions.

Creating a joint integrated European force poses several challenges. First, member states

have to fill the identified EU capability requirements. These requirements should include a minimum level of warfighting capabilities; it should not be acceptable for member states to specialize in non-combatant capabilities only. Second, member states have to take concrete steps to enhance the availability, interoperability, and deployability of their forces. Third, core capabilities should not be limited to only one member state or by a multinational arrangement between member states; there should always be more than one set of resources available.[31] Finally, collective procurement, logistics and maintenance arrangements will increase cost-effectiveness, contribute to a division of labor, mainstreaming procurement and maintenance as well as research efforts. This will vastly improve "member states' capability-to-money-cost and boost overall European military capabilities at the same time."[32]

The joint integrated force architecture will enable the EU to meet its future capability requirements as well as enhance its ability to assemble deployable forces for autonomous contingencies. This modular architecture will also provide a feasible alternative for smaller member states to focus on a niche capability approach, instead of struggling to maintaining an all-round force structure of limited utilitarian value. A permanent BM nucleus, based on the Eurocorps' model, has to be established as a fully joint integrated operational HQ. The joint core capabilities and service building blocks should be dedicated to the integrated force structure and provided as a combination of national and multinational formations. In short, the European integrated force architecture represents a realistic and relevant military alternative for the EU and thus the guideline for smaller member states role and future capability development.

CHAPTER 5 - IMPLICATIONS

Creating the joint integrated European force will primarily affect the smaller member states, the role of NATO, and the US. Despite different perspectives and interests, these implications should not overrule the common endeavor, namely the need for enhanced European military capability. However, successful development of an autonomous European military pillar has to address the prevailing main concerns in a credible way.

Smaller Member States

As the volume of smaller member states' military structure decreases, the support structure represents an increasing part of the entire structure. Cooperation in the various fields of supporting functions, e.g. research and development (R&D), procurement, and maintenance, have the potential for large-scale advantages and thereby significant cost reductions. This would benefit the member states and thereby enable them to maintain a larger component of the operational structure that else would have eroded.

Commitments to integration in collective security arrangements do entail a loss of national military autonomy and require a large degree of mutual trust and confidence. This is, however, nothing new for the large majority of the member states. According to a Dutch query, a number of member states seriously consider specialization; "hesitation seems to be a matter of a lack of framework and the classic question of who jumps first?"[33] Smaller member states should, nevertheless, set the target of permanent structured cooperation, aiming towards providing relevant and required niche capabilities.

According to Dr. John L. Clark at the Marshall Center for Security Studies, the optimal force combination for smaller European nations should, at a minimum, include light conventional infantry formations and special operations forces.[34] These forces, to include necessary supporting capabilities, seem to have the broadest range of utility across the spectrum of conflict and do also address the security challenges as outlined in the ESS. Furthermore, paramilitary forces, e.g. *Gendarmerie*, seem well-suited as force multipliers, especially in stability and security operations.[35]

Maintaining a limited volume of broader range and flexible capabilities would thus be a viable, but relatively inexpensive, part of the individual member state's force inventory.[36] Such forces would, when complemented by capabilities from other partner nations, generate relevant service building blocks to the joint integrated force architecture. Hence, retaining a limited size of broad range capabilities within the force structure would not only benefit the individual member state, but EU as a whole. These capabilities should, however, not delimit smaller member states force contributions. In line with the joint integrated force architecture, smaller nations' most valuable contributions will be by providing joint core elements, i.e. niche capabilities.

<u>NATO versus the EU</u>

Most EU member states are also NATO members. Achieving the capability requirements will enforce a choice between NATO and the EU as the primary security framework. Despite attempts to de-conflict the security efforts of the EU and NATO, it seems obvious that they to some extent are pursuing the same capability goals. Due to limited defense spending of the

European nations, they simply do not have the ability duplicate these efforts in the longer term. The main constraint of NATO is the limited ability to effectuate far reaching military integration, while further European capability development requires far greater degree of integration than already achieved.

The new security challenges and the ongoing enlargement process have gradually changed the role of NATO. This transformation from a collective-defense organization towards a collective security organization has deemphasized NATO's traditional military function.[37] The military value of the Alliance for its member states has thus decreased and is today primarily limited to being a force-pool. Thus, NATO has evolved to an organization having as its foremost purpose to enlarge and keeping the concept of an open security community alive.[38] As stated by Peter van Ham at the Marshall Center for Security Studies: "Unlike NATO, the 'New EU' will not only have a sturdy military capability at its disposal, but also a broad arsenal of economic, financial, and political instruments of statecraft."[39] This underlines that the EU should be the preferred framework for European security and defense development. Consequently, by favoring the EU framework, the role of NATO will be utterly marginalized. If this situation will provide an option for a future, but different role, of NATO will primarily depend on US interests and needs.

<center>The United States</center>

Creation of NATO in the aftermath of World War II was one of the key contributions of the US that facilitated the unification of Europe.[40] Today, the US still maintains a lead role and bears the main burden of the Alliance. Not only does the US is provide the key enabling

capabilities of NATO, but it also pay somewhere between 60 and 85% of its expenditures.[41] As

an example, NATO's management of any significant out of area operations can only be

conducted with US support. Thus, the American pressure to strengthen the European capabilities

– burden sharing – underlines the requirement for a strengthened European military pillar and to

relieve the pressure of American commitments. This process has, however, not achieved the

results as expected and "Washington considers NATO's value to be marginal."[42] An autonomous

EU military pillar would thereby realize the burden sharing between the US and Europe.

By maintaining the lead position in NATO, the US has been able to heavily influence the

European security and defense policy and thereby shape the decisions of the Alliance. The

centerpiece of the US policy from the 1990s has been the enlargement policy of post-communist

democracies.[43] Hence, the transformation of NATO has evolved from a traditional military

alliance towards defense diplomacy, i.e. building or reinforcing perceptions of common

interests.[44] This policy has not only had an impact on NATO itself, but also on the EU. As

reflected in the ESS, the EU has a significant interest in building cooperative relations among the

non-member states of Europe. The US initiative, as initiated through NATO, is of self-interest

for the EU, and would thus be ensured without NATO involvement.

In short, NATO has evolved from a military alliance towards a role of defense diplomacy

and the US perception is that the value of NATO is limited. The US interests as being pursued

through NATO will be ensured due to the EU's self-interest. The role of NATO will thus

gradually decrease, and there are no indications that this tendency should reverse. The role of

NATO, shaped by the Cold War, has thus accomplished its mission, and anyone who expects

that it should remain frozen, is not a realist.[45] The EU will by realizing an autonomous military capability, appear a new political partner for the US.[46]

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

As stated in the outset of this paper, *smaller European member states future military capability development should aim towards developing niche capabilities in the framework of the EU based on permanent structured cooperation.* The basis for this conclusion rests upon systematic analysis of officially articulated aims and objectives as well as identified key trends and challenges.

The EU continues on its course of enlargement and further integration, aiming towards a supranational Union. This evolving process is gradually degrading the member states national sovereignty, to include the complete control of instruments of national power. The next step for the EU, in the field of ESDP, is to establish an autonomous military capability to address its future security threats. The EU need not strive for a military capability equal to that of the US, but must carefully plan its capability requirements according to the ESS. The joint integrated force architecture will enable the EU to meet its future capability requirements as well as enhance its ability to assemble deployable forces for autonomous contingencies. Establishing the joint European force is thereby a key element in this process.

Meanwhile many smaller member states are struggling on to maintain an all-round, but ever shrinking force structure. They are thus the first to face the hard decisions of commitment into collective integrated military arrangements. Because NATO does not offer such far reaching

integration, further development has to be conducted within the frame of the EU.[47] Within the framework of permanent structured cooperation, smaller member states capability development will, by necessity, call for force integration and niche capability approach. This should thus be the primary role and focus for the smaller member states.

Creation of the joint European force will affect the smaller member states force structures, delimit the traditional role of NATO, and affect the role of the US. These implications will require new roles and patterns of cooperation, but most important, strengthening the efforts and capabilities for dealing with future European security challenges.

The concept as outlined in this paper is not radically different from what is already being suggested within isolated fields of cooperation and partly tried out on ad hoc basis. However, further substantial transformation of the European capabilities requires increased depth of integration. The key premise for developing a credible autonomous EU military capability, and thereby facilitating smaller member states commitment to a niche capability approach, rests upon establishment of the joint European integrated force architecture. Most important, however, is the political will and the coherent effort from the member states to realize this articulated ambition. In line with the growing interdependence among the European member states the pending question is not any longer if this will take place, but rather how long it will take.

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